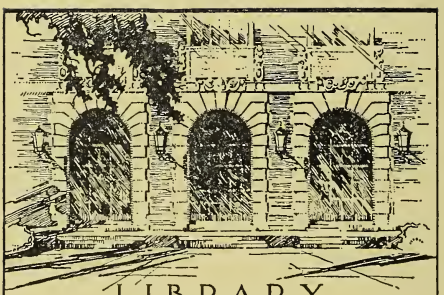
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The Bookman Is A Hummingbird

By J. Christian Bay



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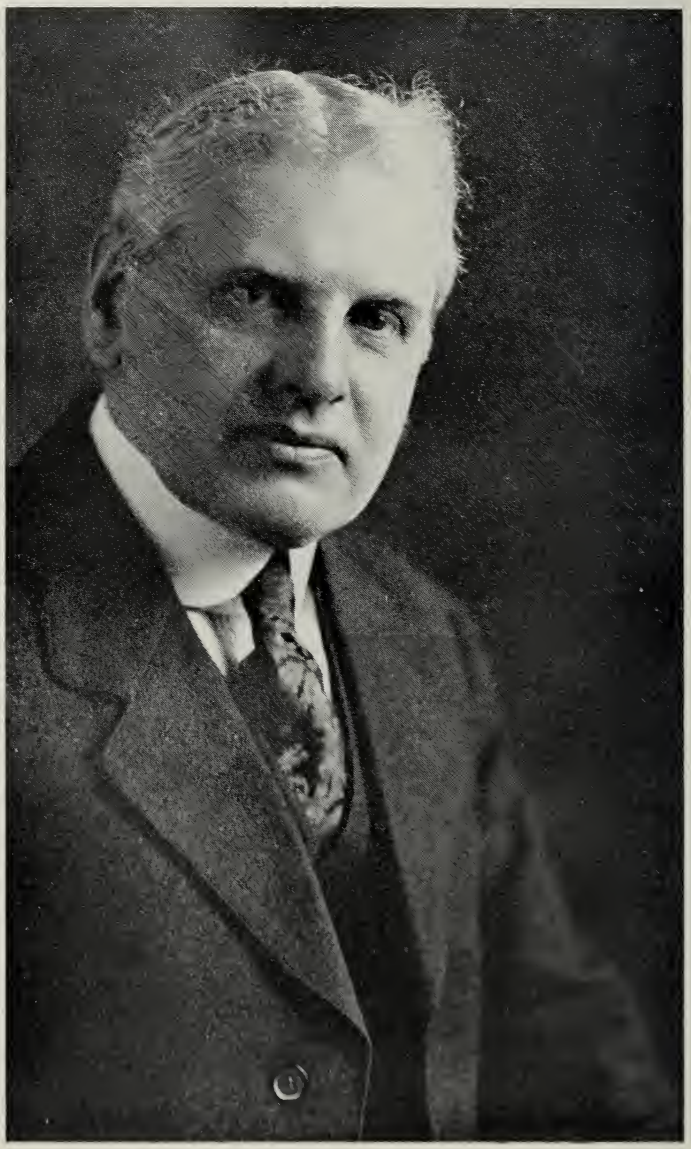
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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

The Bookman Is A Hummingbird

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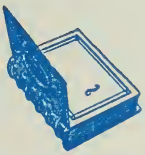
Walter M. Hill

The Bookman Is A Hummingbird

Book Collecting in the Middle West

And

The House of Walter M. Hill



By

J. CHRISTIAN BAY

PRIVATELY PRINTED FOR THE
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Illinois
Historical
Survey

WITH OUR CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

We had in mind to reprint with some commentary the anonymous treatise, *God Speed the Plough*, 1601, of which but two copies are known, one in England, the other in America, and to offer this almost unknown book to our friends, with our Christmas wishes.

In July, however, two of our country's greatest bookmen passed away. One was Dr. Rosenbach, of Philadelphia, the other, Walter M. Hill in Chicago. The house of Hill, hospitable to all friends of the literary arts for nearly fifty years, closed its doors some years ago. It will live in memory for some time, because its influences created many friendships and much pleasant cheer; it also was instrumental in helping to build up a number of very important collections of books that never fade. The "Old General's" activities fell within a most interesting period of book collecting, bibliologic studies and library growth.

So we agreed to defer the *Plough*. It will keep.

The said recent events remind us that many bookmen during the first half of this century have

helped make our region a center of enlightenment. Times being what they are, personal memories easily may dissolve. "Nær ilen er uv, er åsken kol,"— in other words: When the fire is out, the ashes are cold.

Ashes are not very conspicuous. There is an ember light, bright enough to permit us to write some memories, with a few hard facts injected. We are nodding to our younger contemporaries who have kindled their own flame and thus have a capacity for visions wider than those of past days. We share with them the best of our common traditions.

J. Christian Bay

The John Crerar Library

NO better likeness of a bookman was drawn in poetic form than in Riley's dedicatory poem to Young E. Allison: "*The bookman, he's a humming-bird*," even though most of those who entertain bookish habits, present far different physical characteristics. Walter Hill certainly was not of the fluttery kind, nor were most of the persons that acquired the habit of haunting his place of business. And yet, the flitting of habitual bibliophiles from case to case, picking up a book here, scanning and abandoning it, pushing on to something else, making discoveries, hiding their satisfaction over a good "find," pretending indifference and yet nervously alert and hopeful, trusting luck and often finding it, dodging known and unknown competitors — this indeed has much in common with hummingbird or butterfly ways.

But there also were moths: The Caesars, Napoleons and other magnates who, as James Lane Allen once put it, collect books against a fire, or an auction. They would appear before or after important sales or when surprised at something that "the General" had concealed carefully in his safe, to serve as a vertebra in a long-planned cata-

logue. Why had he not revealed that book before? The answer might be that he had thought of taking it home or giving it away, — anyhow, he did not care very much whether or not he sold it.

Well, all right, very good. Somebody carried it away, by common consent. But here was the Whitall catalogue. What did he think this and that and the other thing would bring? Long discussions followed, bids were recorded. Would he attend the sale personally? He certainly would — and he did, outwardly poised, mentally in a turmoil of conjecture, as if the Whitall sale were mankind's last chance to obtain bookish gems. For a fact, he bid in one-third of those Whitall books, and even outbid himself in blind enthusiasm.

Which proves that the General himself carried a sprinkling of star-dust, fairy down and silver scales on his wings.

Upon two personal achievements Walter Hill on occasion would reflect with pride and satisfaction. He won a race with George D. Smith, King of American booksellers, in the auction rooms, for *Helyas, Knight of the Swan*, a Caxton, the only known copy on vellum, urgently wanted by Mrs. Edith Rockefeller McCormick. The price was $21,000 plus the ten percent commission.

This indeed was a feat for a young bookman recently established in business.

The other achievement was that he had made the original, comparative collation of *the Pickwick*, the one and only, the never equalled Pickwick. He bought it for £180 and sold it for $850 under personal pressure. It was sold at the Lapham sale for $1450, later for $3500 and once again for $4600, and so on, until at last it came to rest in the worthy hands of Mr. Owen D. Young.

Intimate friends and patrons would be able to credit Hill with many other feats and interesting experiences growing out of zeal, ability, foresight and courage, such as a bookman true to the best traditions, will exemplify.

Walter Hill was born in Bristol on October 10, 1868. His ancestors came from Herefordshire, the history of which reveals interesting archeologic data and agricultural achievements of the highest order. Definitely a Roman Britisher, he retained throughout life the cool individualism of his national group, colored by the Puritan integrity of the Victorian age. Aloof but dependable, remote in some ways and yet with a heart of wax, he had a wholesome capacity for friendship, considered books in a large way, like Quaritch, and thus might be called upon for cool counselorship, which attracted some persons and made

others hesitate until they discovered the man's invariable fairness. His toleration of fractious spirits and innocent imposition will be remembered by many. The few who witnessed his reactions to occasional knavery will recollect the icy stolidity and the withering scorn with which he would meet this, happily rare, defect. Very amusing were some wholly unconscious mannerisms of his; he would pretend forgetfulness about dates, prices, values, and names, in order to have time to recall to memory what he knew as well as anybody, and might pretend also to accept the most barefaced prevarication as readily as would a child. Courage he had abundantly in his business ventures. Many were the occasions when he would take a deep plunge at an auction without regard to possible consequences — maybe to tease Dr. R. or to administer a mild rebuke to somebody who had an aversion to letting others live.

Dr. R. and Walter Hill both left us in the month of July, 1952. Dr. R. was a scholar with an extraordinary orientation in both bibliology and business, while Hill, to put it briefly, throughout his life learned by experience and disliked the business end of his calling. Each, in his own way, left an enviable reputation — and yet, with due respect for Dr. R.'s extraordinary accomplishments, Hill reaped for himself deep affection. Between these two ranked James F. Drake and

Lathrop C. Harper and Charles F. Goodspeed. What if their cumulated knowledge of books might have been preserved in some way and recorded! But, Mr. Harper would say, think of Mr. Eames! And, librarians will say, each new generation must save up knowledge by its own efforts.

Walter Hill served four years of apprenticeship with Jeffries, the Bristol bookseller, one of the men of the old school that might say, "We are sorry to report that the copy you ordered was sold when the order was received, but we have a slightly rubbed copy which we can supply for two shillings less." The boy saw and memorized titles.

Emigration is an irregularity. We cannot say why Hill came to America as a youth of seventeen, but presently he was engaged by J. W. Bouton in New York and after some years went with Estes and Lauriat in Boston, whereupon he joined the staff of A. C. McClurg & Co. in Chicago. The nineties were famous for many interesting social phenomena, and even for a great financial so-called depression — which, however, affected capitalists less than the so-called rank and file of our population. Intrinsically valuable books came into demand. McClurg's "Saints' and Sinners' Corner" flourished. Encouraged by a few well-to-do collectors Walter Hill decided, as he once jestingly put it, to "buy a cannon and start a war

of his own," and accomplished this in 1899 with a small stock of first editions and Kelmscott books then rising in fame and favor, and with a capital of five hundred Dollars, the savings of his young wife. He opened a small office in the South-East part of the Marshall Field square, two floors above the newly established John Crerar Library. There he and I met. He had in a newly issued catalogue advertised a copy of Charles Fenno Hoffman's *Wild Scenes in the Forest and Prairie*, 1843. Money was scarce among library assistants in those days, and the book (a beautiful copy) cost $8.00. I remarked that Arthur Clark had catalogued one at $6.00. Promptly Hill flashed out: "Then why don't you buy Clark's copy?" I smiled and replied: "Because now that I've seen it, I want yours."

I believe that for a while he farmed out some general books to a book-shop across the street, organized by Hayes (the President's son), Cooke & Co. This store failed for the reason that the stock actually was arranged according to the Dewey Decimal Classification, but Hill contended that the real reason lay in the fact that somebody blundered after the fashion of famous Oily Gammon, as he proved an expert in making funds vanish. The shop, however, for a while entertained as a clerk one of the greatest bookmen of the world, a man entitled to the cognomen of

Charles Aubrey, — if we may revert once more to the nomenclature of Warren's *Ten Thousand a Year.*

The house of Hill prospered from the outset. Kelmscott books sold themselves and are still moving about. Nobody ever reads them, but they keep their endearing charms, even though modern vellum bindings are nightmares. Catalogues were printed and distributed. In nearly fifty years their number reached about a hundred fifty. Nr. 2 contained 22, Nr. 3, 19 Kelmscotts (including the Shelley on vellum). Nr. 11 (with a preface by Wallace Rice) described a *Robinson Crusoe* in the very finest state, a *Vicar of Wakefield*, immaculate, the three Keats and Lamb's *Rosamund Gray.* Kipling and Stevenson began to attract attention; a *Child's Garden of Verses* stood at $25, a clean and fine copy of the *New Arabian Nights*, although not even now a book to live with, was marked $50.

With Chicago and the Middle Border developing quickly as a cultural center Hill did not face much competition at the outset, although naturally his Eastern colleagues tried to cover as large a field as possible. One blow came to him, however, in the early years, the loss of his intelligent and accomplished wife. He never recovered all his natural buoyancy, but consolation came in the companionship of his daughter Margaret (later

Mrs. Lawrence Montgomery) and, in time, in the remarkable scholarly careers and the devotion of two granddaughters. These, his family, always were uppermost in his thoughts; even though for years far away they protected him against being lonesome, as a host of friends indeed kept him cheerful.

But no man, especially when he builds up a useful business and a reputation for personal and professional integrity, can be considered separate from his group. We therefore must review the background against which Walter Hill built his house in Chicago, and the needs and demands that he was called upon to fill.

Private book collecting naturally began and developed in Chicago and the Middle West much as it did elsewhere, in an effort of some thoughtful individuals to enlighten themselves and preserve past and contemporary evidence sustaining records of fact and memory. Long before the fire of 1871 a considerable mass of books, papers, and other relics were assembled at the instance of the Chicago Historical Society, and even after the great fire had destroyed this harvest, a second gleaning, not negligible, was possible. The preserving forces of those days — the men of action and of foresight who took a hand in public affairs — earned much still unrecorded praise. Four of our

governors are authors of very creditable histories of this state, and many of our judges, our editors, our bankers, and even our businessmen, proved themselves most efficient protectors of records, papers, letters, and other documents, which time and again became essential for the purpose of critical historical studies.

It is quite a pleasure and far from idle for anybody capable of analyzing biographical detail to determine the literary preferences of those of our early settlers who paid attention to books. The aggregate influence of the resultant enlightenment had made it possible for Francis Browne (1843-1913) to establish here, as early as 1880, the *Dial*, a critical literary paper of the highest order, unequaled anywhere for sound judgment and analytical acumen. This wholesome paper continued uninterruptedly here in Chicago until 1918, Browne having died in 1913, and then passed into the hands of the Dial Publishing Company in New York. The continuation compares with the original *Dial* as the original *Life* with its contemporary namesake. I do not hesitate to assert most emphatically that when the *Dial* moved out of Chicago, the Western note in higher literary criticism passed and was lost. The *Chicago Record*, and the *Daily News* with Eugene Field as its literary and bookish columnist, for years helped

greatly to guide public opinion in the province of books.

Much later, the same quality of criticism was exemplified by Mr. Llewellyn Jones, in the *Chicago Evening Post*. But, as in the case of Browne, his work was a one-man effort. That excellent paper ceased publication, and Mr. Jones went East in search of a conservative field of work, and found it.

Under the broad wing of Browne grew a zest for good writing and publishing. Hamlin Garland came out of Boston and preached his wholesome gospel of provincial values. Dreiser flourished his pen, preparatory to putting it in action, and Henry Fuller bloomed out as a meticulous, although not definitely localized, fictionist. Emerson Hough, the conscientious interpreter of our golden period in Western life — the cattle-trail days, the outlaw and rustler romances, and the drama of land exploitation and the Indian outrages — worked among us, spreading Western enlightenment with a prodigal hand. Publishers arose out of the ranks of book lovers in the firms of Stone and Kimball, Way and Williams, and F. W. Schulte, and A. C. McClurg found firm footing. Schulte clung exclusively and passionately to his mid-west program, manifested by the symbol of the sunflower which adorned the spine of his books.

As already indicated, it was Eugene Field who first struck the note of pure and purposeful book collecting in the literary field amid Chicago amateurs of the fine arts. It implied only a personal enthusiasm, the assertion of one's preference, preparing ammunition for thought and fancy, without social or bibliographical responsibilities. Chicago libraries at that time, sixty years ago, were in a state of adolescence or just coming into existence; we stood in this respect as did New York before the coming of Lenox and Astor. The writer remembers the day when our city became electrified by the exhibition in McClurg's shop window of a copy of *David Copperfield* inscribed on the title-page by the author to his sister Letitia. The book was marked "$750.00" — plainly a colossal price for a book. People glared, newspapers made comment, our modest *amateurs de livres* shuddered. Nevertheless, the book was absorbed and went out of circulation for fifty years. It went to Iowa. The ferment had begun to act.

Private book collecting in Chicago in those times had been whimsically apostrophized by occasional sinister allusions. One, aired by the *Boston Transcript*, was to the effect that when a certain Chicago capitalist died and his estate came up for valuation, the appointments of his "library" had been assessed at $36,000, his books

at $300. If this were true, it was not prophetic of Chicago's future.

There was in the early nineties an approach to a local (Western) revival in literature and art. It implied the conscious assertion of the "Middle Border," as Hamlin Garland termed the region explored by himself and interpreted with wholesome "veritism." Garland was supported in this effort by Eugene and Roswell Field, Henry Fuller, Lorado Taft, and other artists, fictionists, and veritists, who believed that local landscapes, the morning glow, and the sunset prophecy and regional forms of life and struggle, would determine the tones of Western art, satisfy the people of this province, and divert their attention from the pale blue tint of Eastern æsthetics. This *naissance* was delayed for the same reason that operated in removing sailing craft from our central lakes, and to this day we cannot find in any Chicago library a comprehensive collection of books typical of our life on the Middle Border. They never until recently attracted deserved academic consideration except at the publication of my slight paper, *Scarce and Beautiful Imprints of Chicago* (1922), when Harvard and Yale began to check their holdings against even my fragmentary enumeration and to cover their lacunae. Meanwhile, Theodore Robinson, of Elgin, and William Douglas, had quietly scanned the field and formed very



Little Dorrit and Arthur Clennam
Painting by Wm. Frith

good collections of the best of the Chicago region, but when they died their holdings were scattered. I examined the collections of these men. Each, although limited, would have been an ornament to any institution interested in Western forms of life. Each contained many of the best efforts of early Chicago writers and middle Western historians and humanists and, in addition, many small and seemingly insignificant books which helped to give tone to the symphony of Chicago.

The Caxton Club, the Chicago Literary Club, and the Dofobs Club greatly helped to crystallize taste and preference eamong Chicago bookmen. They were forecast by Eugene Field, whose *Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac* and various "bibliosophic" poems acted as an invitation to a merry dance around the altar of bookish gods and demigods, the tune being struck from day to day for many years by Field's unforgettable "Sharps and Flats," even years after we had lost him.

Purposeful, systematic, sustained book collecting selects anywhere its devotees without regard to any other factor than the needs of the individual. Purchasing power, or wealth, is as incidental in this respect as up-bringing and education. The example of others may operate, and probably did so here in Chicago, in whose life many more thoughtful and enlightened persons entered than our city commonly is credited with sustaining.

These and the people in general, for many years did not enjoy adequate public libraries as we know them to-day. But books were needed — first necessities, later perhaps also legitimate bookish luxuries — and so private libraries came into being.

Probably the most dramatic figure among Chicago *amateurs* was Charles Frederick Gunther (1837-1920), literally a collector of collections. He amassed antiques, historical furniture, paintings and engravings, books and manuscripts, and a variety of spectacular objects of curiosity suited for exhibition in his place of business. His chief interest centered upon Abraham Lincoln, and in time his famous holdings in this and similar fields — mainly letters and manuscripts — passed into the hands of Oliver R. Barrett, who developed them enormously, not forgetful of the many side-lights which are concerned with practically all historical Lincoln associations. Gunther also amassed numerous incunabula, most of which after his death found a permanent resting place in the Huntington Library. An exquisite twelfth-century Cistercian antiphonary was acquired by Dom Edmond M. Obrecht, of Gethsemane, Kentucky. A complete copy, in exquisite condition, of the Canozius Aristotle (Padua, 1472-74) rubricated and illumined, went to William Clark, of

San Mateo. It was found in a garage, in a packing box, after Gunther's death. Many of his Americana remained in Chicago.

Edward Everett Ayer (1841-1927) was unique among Chicago bookmen by the wide views he held not only of the necessary scope of his collecting activities but also of his duties to posterity, as dictated by his conscience. The story of his life and influence has been told elaborately by Lockwood and more briefly by myself. The Ayer Collection of American historical sources in the Newberry Library and the Ayer Ornithological Collection in the Field Museum, are the principal monuments to his energy, but above these results of his services stands his motive of will and spirit. Ayer naturally rejoiced in the success which met his efforts as a businessman, a bookman and a Maecenas to Museums, but these achievements were wholly overshadowed by the consideration that he himself had been singularly fortunate in that his associates in the administration of the Newberry Library, the Field Museum, and the Art Institute, had encouraged him to follow his ideals and to collect books and objects of art *for the ultimate benefit of the public.* No collector ever effaced himself more completely than Ayer in this his task of happiness. He did not simply contemplate extending the favor of gifts and endowments; he considered himself favored by their

acceptance. His Prescott is famous and also his two "eyes" of New England. He embraced by his sympathy our East and West equally, and his personal history is unique and a felicitous example.

The three Chicago institutions which benefited by the enthusiasm of this great man responded readily to his hopes and wishes. There is no better bibliography of books on birds than John Todd Zimmer's *Catalogue of the Edward E. Ayer Ornithological Library*, published by the Field Museum in 1926. But even when we wander into comparatively remote libraries and museums here and there, we may find some museum objects or some needed collection of books, which has been provided by Ayer. This is true of the Northwestern Military and Naval Academy, of Geneva, Illinois, where a general and reference collection witness the generosity of the practical idealist, whose summer home for many years stood in close proximity to the school.

As a patron saint of the Newberry Library Ayer was succeeded by Mr. William Brooks Greenlee, eminent also as a scholar in the field of Portuguese history and literature.

The example of Ayer as a patron of historical sources affected his friend, George Manierre (1845-1924), who specialized in local history and our Civil War in a conservative way. He had many important rarities but usually yielded to

Ayer any unique pieces, such as it would be treasonable to withhold from ultimate public use. "George," Ayer would say time and again, "you cannot help yielding that book to me. Remember, my collection is intended for the children of our generation."

Americana, especially Western history and exploration, also formed the vital care and interest of George Paullin (1864-1933), a careful collector and a great enthusiast over the virtues of the Mississippi Valley and her people, past and present. He possessed some classics, such as John W. Audubon's *Illustrated Notes of an Expedition through Mexico and California* (1852), the introuvable Scammon law reports, and very many Chicago and other Illinois imprints interesting for their contents. Paullin firmly believed that the first Chicago imprint was a blank bank cheque, but never succeeded in proving his point or in locating the imprint.

Close to Ayer ranks Dr. Frank Wakeley Gunsaulus (1856-1921), clergyman and author and in his day a friend of all friends of books. Whether Dr. Gunsaulus was born with the instinct or happened to be infected by the *bacillus librorum* by contact with Frank Morris, never will be known, but history and tradition bloomed and bore fruit in his garden, and Field duly immortalized his bookish exploits and those of the Rev.

Dr. Frank Bristol. The two, Gunsaulus and Bristol, with Field hovering near as a benevolent Mephisto, jointly resorted to all kinds of gay bookish exploits before, during, and after the turn of this century. All three were confessedly poor, but the two "friars," as Field termed them, nevertheless not only amassed considerable libraries of *humana* and *humaniora* but are credited with large and valuable gifts to the Ryerson and other libraries in Chicago. "Friar Gonsol" and "Friar Francis" for years inspired the "Saints' and Sinners' corner" in McClurg's bookstore on Wabash Avenue, where bookish and literary men met and compared notes in mutual sympathy and essayed upon one another innocent and poetic pranks.

Cyrus Hall McCormick (1859-1936) began late in life his excursion into the field of rare and fundamental books in an effort to assemble some of the most important original printed documents on Virginia, our cardinal province. A small but exceedingly choice collection, by which the Princeton University Library, I believe, benefited, was the first result. It includes several key pieces from the Percy (Northumberland) sale, such as Robert Rich's *News from Virginia* (1610), a copy of which was registered in a Rosenbach sale catalogue in 1946 at $27,800. Rich took part in the voyage of the Virginia Company's ship, The Sea-

Venture, which went out in 1609 and was wrecked at the Bermudas "where they [the crew] remayned 42 weekes & builded two pynaces in which they returned into Virginia." Mr. McCormick had a quick and sure eye for genuine quality and intrinsic values in books and took to study auction catalogues with the same kind of attention that he devoted to business, and in time assembled in a quiet way also a respectable array of Western source books, including a few very good manuscripts. Among these books was a copy of G. W. Stipp's *Western Miscellany*, Xenia, Ohio, 1827. In my "Fortune of Books" I said that to this book attaches a tale. I shall tell it now.

Some time in the twenties William Douglas, an ardent collector of pioneer period literature, came to me with a parcel of books which he felt that he must sell to cover some doctors' bills resulting from illness in his family. The parcel contained some nice things and a copy of *Stipps'* book which once had been owned by James McBride, the Ohio historian, and still bore McClurg's sale price of years previously, $1.25. I happened to know that at that time only two copies were known, one complete, the other not. So I remarked that there he had a very valuable book. He asked how valuable, and on the spur of the moment I answered: "Oh, a thousand Dollars." My reason for this "snap" judgment was that I knew the

book contained reprints of John Bradford's *Notes on Kentucky*, copied from the *Kentucky Gazette*, extant in but one "run" in Lexington, Kentucky. Thompson had described the book in his Ohio bibliography. Until then, but few had ever seen it.

Mr. Douglas naturally was surprised at my estimate. I promptly sent the book to one of our bookselling Caesars and asked him what he thought of it. He replied that it looked very good to him; was it for sale? I replied that it belonged to a man in need of funds, and as no price records existed, I conjectured it was worth a thousand dollars. The reply was that he would go as far as seven hundred fifty, which was encouraging. But I made no reply; I turned the matter over to Walter Hill.

Shortly afterward, Mr. Herschel V. Jones passed through Chicago on his way from the Mayo Clinic at Rochester. He invited Walter Hill and myself to luncheon and asked what we knew about a book called *The Western Miscellany*, written by a man by the name of Stipp. While at Rochester he had received a copy from the great Mr. Caesar. "Now," said Jones, "I admit it is a very important and scarce book. But when it comes to values, I follow an instinct. In this case I saw $1250, and I saw no more than that. But

the price is $1750, and that is too much. So I returned the book."

A few days later I had the Stipp returned to me, and it was introduced to Mr. Cyrus H. McCormick. Naturally he at first considered it a very ordinary, even though perhaps interesting, local imprint, so he was informed about its intrinsic merits, viewed it more closely and inquired about the price. His reaction was that a thousand dollars was a "crazy" price. An argument followed, and the special character of the matter was explained. This was not a case where Walter Hill had purchased a book and held it for sale. It was not a business affair. The full price would go to the owner, who trusted expert advise. Finally Mr. McCormick declared that if he were given absolute proof that the valuation was fair and square, he would accept the book and pay the price. He then was told that it had been valued at $1750 by a nationally known bookman and offered for sale at that figure. He promptly paid the thousand, which directly passed into the hands of Mr. Douglas — who could not help regret that the precious Stipp, after all, passed out of his hands. If he had lived until 1932, he might have obtained the excellent reprint critically edited by John Wilson Townsend and published by the Grabhorn Press in San Francisco.

This reprint has a title-page which ought to

have earned for Edwin Grabhorn the title of Doctor of Printing Laws. There are a few American title pages indicative of the highest attainments of taste and art in printing. Our classic example of course is Franklin's *Cato Major*; another is De Vinne's title in Eugene Field's *With Trumpet and Drum* (1892), the large paper edition.

Deservedly respected as a sagacious bookman was Mr. Patrick A. Valentine (1861-1916) an ardent collector of modern English classics, famed as the owner of the original manuscript of the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, and Kiplingiana.

The library of James W. Ellsworth (1849-1925) reflected its owner's interest in fine printing. It included a copy on paper of the Gutenberg Bible and was ultimately sold and redistributed under the hand of Dr. Rosenbach.

The collection known as the Printers' Library, for many years kept as a unit in the Library of the Chicago Historical Society, and which contained much early Chicago material, pamphlets, broadsides, clippings &c., was one of the sources used by Mr. Douglas C. McMurtrie in compiling his very useful bibliography of early Chicago imprints (1927). In later years, our local bibliography has been an object of special interest in our libraries, especially the Newberry.

The John M. Wrenn collection, now part of

the library of the University of Texas, and the Wing Foundation, a department of the Newberry Library, are so well known and have been described so often that a bare mention of them here will suffice. Col. Wrenn specialized, as the printed catalog of his library shows, in British literary classics. His taste and direction held scholarship and comprehensive understanding. He had the advice and cultivated the experience of the abundantly and sufficiently maligned Thomas B. Wise, without whose learning not even the William T. Howe collection would approach the character of a unit.

I once, to relieve my feelings, said to Walter Hill that while counterfeiting is infamous, Wise, after all, confined his efforts to pennyworths and tokens.

He glared at me. "Yes," he said, "counterfeiting Americana is the only crime that would stir you up!"

John M. Wing for many years brought together examples of classical and other fine printing and illustration and, unlike Wrenn or Spoor, minded the needs of the Newberry Library by establishing there the foundation which carries his name. No institution could fulfil the purpose of this bequest better than did the directors, librarians and curators of the Newberry.

Horace Hawes Martin (1855-1925), while not

a confessed collector, although he gradually brought together a "gentleman's library" of nearly 50,000 volumes, deserves mention because he probably fulfilled better than most the function of a bookman serving as a library trustee. His knowledge of books, editions, and issues, his selective sense, and his prodigious memory in the field of history and biography and of the coherence of great books, were unusual if not unique among us. Although Martin professed no scholarship except in law, he should be remembered as a most eminent judge of those books by which is perpetuated the knowledge of our essential traditions in significant literary and historical work. Mr. Martin extended this knowledge to editions, editors, critical apparatus, and commentary, and applied it to the accretions of the Newberry Library as a Director and a member of the book committee.

Akin in spirit to Dr. Gunsaulus was Dr. Otto Leopold Schmidt (1863-1935), one of our most useful citizens, a scholar in medicine, a devotee to history, and an assiduous bookman. His library of about 70,000 volumes reflected these interests. But, apart from this, Dr. Schmidt for many years made very considerable donations to our Chicago libraries and many other institutions, usually important and expensive books and manuscripts. Individual scholars and students rarely appealed to him in vain; he also supported publications

that would not pay for themselves. Incidental, as all his efforts were, to his work in his medical specialty, Dr. Schmidt contrived to serve on innumerable committees and boards involving our public welfare. He always found time for such service and for assigning uses for the books he understood and loved. The bulk of his Americana now may be found in the Chicago Historical Society. His collection of literature on the arctic and antarctic countries came to The John Crerar Library, as did, by gift, much of his medical research material. The University of Illinois also had its share. Unlike Ayer, Dr. Schmidt did not confessedly acquire his books and his enormous holdings of manuscripts and autographs with a view to their ultimate public use, except when he definitely met the special needs or wishes of some institution. He made his choice by instinct. Wherever a volume bearing his bookplate turns up in the future, this instinct will be verified, as will the memory of a lovable, devoted champion of true demophily remain in our civic annals.

Both Owen Franklin Aldis (1853-1925) and Alfred Landon Baker (1859-1927), successful men of affairs, manifested an interest in first editions of American and British authors and covered the field comprehensively. The library of Aldis fell to the share of Yale University, while that of

Baker was scattered. None of these men collected spectacularly, but each took a genuine interest in the literary sources of our land, without leaning toward those provincial preferences which, while gratifying, may dull one's sense of national types and trends.

Francis S. Peabody (1859-1922) came into the fold of book collectors by accident — in taking over a private library as part of an estate. The books had no special significance, but Peabody looked into them and presently found his inspiration in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. This was the beginning of a Stevenson collection equaled by few and overshadowed not even by that of John A. Spoor, which was built up simultaneously. The books and pamphlets were not difficult to obtain then; but Peabody gradually amassed also a wealth of Stevenson manuscripts and letters which at that time (1900-1920) roused much competition among collectors, although *Penny Whistles*, the chrysalis of *A Child's Garden of Verses*, at no time has gone begging for recognition. To Peabody's sorrow he never obtained that resplendent gem "*I'll sing you a song of the tropical seas on board the old Equator*," but his enthusiasm for Stevenson had merited it.

When Sir Sidney Colvin donated to an English war relief committee, during the first world war,

a large collection of very important and but partly published autograph letters of Robert Louis Stevenson, it was sold for £600, resold in England for £800, and finally entered Chicago, the price then having risen to $10,000, i.e. £2000. The letters came in a mahogany box, which for weeks reposed in my home — and under my bed at night — while I transcribed the often very difficult chirography of R. L. S. for Mr. Peabody, at his request. Many portions of these letters have not been published even yet.

May I be indulged in adding that the transcribing of the more than two hundred pages of writing, the work of many nights, was performed as an official service of the John Crerar Library! But I enjoyed it greatly.

The diversified interests of Mrs. Harold L. McCormick (1872-1932) were partly responsible for the assembling of a private collection which would have been a credit to any savant here or in Europe. Philosophy and religion were represented not only by classics and fundamental research material but also by the documents of current discussions and ventilations of critical problems of modern interest. It is a pity that these collections were scattered before anybody made an attempt to analyze the many annotations which the books carried. This would have enabled somebody to trace the interests and the mental ac-

tivities of a lady who not only exerted a strong social influence but sustained an intellectual position as a student possessed of a scientific method and much original thought. Notable among Mrs. McCormick's rare books were the Caxtons, which she at one time thought necessary to her studies. Her copies of the first Heliodorus and of *Helyas Knight of the Swan* (London, 1512), the unique copy on vellum used for producing the reprint in 1901, are milestones on the long road of book-auction treks.

Although not a Chicago man, Herschel V. Jones, of Minneapolis, takes a place in our group, owing to his close affiliation here. Jones stands out in the memory of American bookmen like a caliph in fairyland; he had imagination, speculative ability, a sure instinct about "condition," and courage. A powerful, although often hidden, figure in the New York and London auction-rooms, he followed nobody's lead but plunged into one field after another, now English and American classics, then fine imprints or unica that appealed to him all the more when they were ardently pursued by others. Some of these collections successively went to the auction table. In time he found rest with classical Americana and acquired from Walter Hill, by way of a nucleus, the entire collection of Ambrose Cramer

(1859-1927), a small but well-selected array of our Colonial and later classics, all in what came to be known as "Jones state," mostly uncut, spotless copies in contemporary bindings. He, unlike Ayer, did not read his books, but was charmed as he got them, and then proceeded to acquire more, such as the "two eyes" of New England, the Brereton and the Rosier, and fought valiantly for the third eye, the Hamor.

Jones had funny ways, he would turn up in Chicago and proclaim that he had made thirty-five thousand dollars on a paper deal, so he would better buy some Western books; and then he proceeded to catechise. Which book would be a real "stinger"? As a Western man I was supposed to know. I suggested Lewis F. Thomas and J. C. Wild, *The Valley of the Mississippi*, St. Louis, 1841, printed for subscribers and issued in eight parts, with fine lithographs.

"Well, how rare is it?"

Two complete copies and a fragment are known and located.

"How many plates?"

About thirty.

"Paper covers or what?"

The eight parts in brown paper covers. None gathered in original binding.

"What is it worth?"

Anything you have.

Off he went to New York, and two weeks later returned with a fine copy in the original state. He refused to say where and how he obtained it, but murder will out, and some years later the secret dissolved in a queer coincidence. Up in New England the copy had turned up in a garret, after the fashion of Poe's *Tamerlane*. It was sold in Boston, sold again in New York, and once more sold — to L. C. Harper. The scale of prices was: $100 — $350 — $500 — $1500. These data were not supported by sworn statement, but they cannot be far from fact; anyway, Jones paid the ultimate price.

Later on, as he exhausted in his way the Western field, as not furnishing sufficient excitement and rousing skirmish, he turned his attention to the Colonial period and proved that copies of great rarities would come forward at his beck and call. The man being innocently vain, his Americana later were described and facsimiles of title-pages injected, this display being published as an historical record of Jones's collecting energy. But Walter Hill could be adamant. When Mr. Jones got on his nerves, he took the *Hamor* away from him — the much overrated Hamor, of which twenty-two copies haunt our bivouacs of dead books.

Once a London auction catalogue advertised and printed a facsimile of an extraordinary rarity,

Westward for Smelts. Mr. Hill telephoned to me: Mr. Jones would like to know if that was a source book desirable for his collection of Americana; if so, how much ought he to bid? — I told Hill that the book is a piece of facetious farcical fancy, not nice at all but highly esteemed as early British and unbelievably scarce, but far from genteel. No bid was made.

Mr. Jones finally specialized on first editions of first books by famous authors of England and America. In this field he made considerable progress, as indeed he did with his excellent collections of etchings, now preserved as a unit in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. In this special and really noble field he, for once, did not collect against an auction.

Jones expected and hoped to discover a copy of Cotton Mather's *Early Piety* (Boston, 1690), but this excellent booklet still survives only by the two London editions of 1689 (and later ones). Still, he had the satisfaction of including in his holdings the famous anonymous *Account of the Method and Success of Inoculating the Smallpox in Boston* (1722), in 1912 authenticated and placed in its historical setting by Professor Kittredge. When I asked his permission to have a photostat copy of this made for the Crerar Library, Jones refused very politely, although I was the one that informed him that the book was a

first Mather. He felt that such copying would injure the value of rare books.

From Minneapolis we turn to Cincinnati.

One of the largest and in its day most enviable private collections was that of Mr. W. T. H. Howe, of Cincinnati. It extended all over the field of English and American literature, especially the later two centuries, including books and manuscripts. For many years it grew at the rate of $5000 per month and more, and was increased constantly by purchases at auctions at home and in London. From Lamb to the post-Victorians it formed an enormous aggregation, as it did for the period between the early nineteenth century in our own country and the later realism. A *Jane Eyre* certainly is a monument, but with the original autograph dedication (of the second edition) to Thackeray inserted, it becomes unique. The *Ebb Tide* manuscript in two parts, one in Stevenson's handwriting on foolscap sheets, likewise has a world-wide literary significance, as well as Tennyson's personal copies of his demure books, one inscribed, after a private reading, to the Brownings.

Mr. Howe in his later years entertained with lavish hospitality a number of authors at his home, "Freelands," in Kentucky, close to Cincinnati. For some years he was in the habit of inviting

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies:
– Hate you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower, but if I could understand
What you are root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

Farringford,
Freshwater,
Isle of Wight.

TENNYSON . AUTOGRAPH

authors, librarians and bookmen generally, to parties given on some occasion, real or imaginary. Once the writer accepted such an invitation and, after an evening's discussion of books and authors and a short night's rest, was left alone in the great house with instructions to prepare a lecture on the "Athens of the West," to be given before an audience at luncheon in town. As a matter of fact, the assignment was not a difficult one, for Cincinnati possesses plenty of literary history. The audience applauded my mediocre improvisation.

Padraic Colum, E. V. Lucas and James Stephens stayed with Howe for longer or shorter periods, and John Galsworthy and his gentle, hearty wife twice were guests of honor there. Howe would dearly have liked to own the manuscripts of the *Forsyte Saga*; what he did obtain, and which anybody would even pay a fee merely to look at, was the manuscript of *Memories*, the biography of a little dog about which Mrs. Galsworthy said that they had had many dogs, but only one *dog*.

Mr. Howe liked to do things with masterful gestures. Once, in 1930, he printed privately *Two Essays on Conrad*, by Galsworthy, with fine illustrations. There were ninety three copies. Fifty of these were taken by Howe's friends at $100 each, and he had a way of making them do

it. The money was transferred to the author by way of royalties. The book contains a four-color reproduction of a portrait of Galsworthy, painted by his young and gifted relative, R. H. Sauter. It is not only a speaking likeness, it is almost pathetic in its perfection, as we recall the man's living presence.

Howe failed to obtain the *Tristam Shandy* in original boards, uncut. Elsewise, as regards books, he obtained what he wanted. Instinctively generous, of Napoleonic inclinations, appreciative of fine and genuine, authentic relics of the world's great artists, from the mircoscopic manuscripts of Charlotte Bronté to Revere silver, he passed away with sad suddenness. Perhaps he was but moderately happy, but Fortune favored him greatly while he lived and even more after he left us, in that his collections of books for the greater part found their deserved resting place in the New York Public Library, due to the generosity of a local Mæcenas and the foresight of one of our great bookmen.

And then we come to another outsider, Luther Albertus Brewer (1858-1933), of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. A true, loyal supporter of all constructive forces in mankind, he would bring good cheer to the dullest crowd and warmth to a chilled room. Founder of The Torch Press, for years he printed

the well known books issued by the Bibliophile Society of Boston. For years, again, he wrote the Christmas books distributed by The Torch Press. Searching for a field in which he might hope to accumulate not only books as books but a coherent group, he encouraged himself to explore Leigh Hunt and his circle. For nearly a half century he surprised himself and others by the scope involved in this exploration, because Leigh Hunt's associations extended all the way from Lamb and Keats and Shelley to the Brownings. In The Torch Press Christmas book of 1933 — the first after the long series written or edited by Brewer himself, and in the preface to his Leigh Hunt bibliography (1932), I have told the story of Brewer's literary life, in which Walter Hill was as important a force as anybody. Mr. Brewer's collection, as it now is preserved in the library of the University of Iowa, is almost fabulous in its wide ramifications and in its lateral span, quite apart from the main subject. That such a mass of letters and manuscripts in such profusion should still be available in this century, is a miracle. More than most other private collections which I have seen does this period-collection show what a private individual can accomplish, *that no public institution or library, with its manifold interests and duties, ordinarily can do,* — and the importance of *protecting coherent units from being scattered.*

Mr. Brewer's Christmas books are classics in their way. His documentary elucidation of the Skimpole caricature in Dickens' *Bleak House*, and the reactions (now, quite a hundred years afterward, worrying the friends of Dickens' muse) will be long remembered.

Keats' *Endymion*, inscribed on the title-page by the poet to Leigh Hunt and for years the property of Earl Rosebery, would have been an ornament to Brewer's library.

I treasure the memory of my friend Luther printing, on a challenge, for me the *Gettysburg Speech*, one copy only! Two copies actually were printed and bound in full crushed red morocco. Brewer kept one, but years later I discovered, and absorbed, the other.

The collection formed during a period of thirty years by John Alden Spoor, railroad man and capitalist, covered most of the British literary lights from Lamb to Kipling. His Lamb collection, which formed the basis of Livingston's bibliography of this poet, probably was unique in its completeness. His Keats, Tennyson, and Kipling groups lacked but few outstanding pieces. For Dickens he cared little; but, being temperamentally close to Thackeray, he covered this author with great zeal. He possessed that copy of *The History of Pendennis* which the author inscribed to his physician, Dr. Elliotson, to whom

the book also was dedicated. Thackeray had been very ill while at work on *Pendennis*, and considered himself duly indebted to his physician for restoring his health and perhaps saving his life. It was this identical copy which Harry Elkins Widener, having himself missed the opportunity of buying it, was very eager to obtain, offering even to quadruple the original price. But Spoor declined to part with this book. It went to the auction table, was absorbed for $2,500 by W. T. H. Howe, and so at last came to rest in the New York Public Library. Spoor's library, instead of being given, as would seem natural, to some Chicago institution, suffered the sad fate of being buried for about twelve years in a Chicago bank vault, to await a change of the financial temperature. The rise never came. Many of the books, meanwhile, had lost financial and speculative caste, and their provenance was indifferent — a sad fate for a collection assembled with brilliant zeal, exquisite taste and sustained conviction.

In a different way, gentle Chester H. Thordarson (1867(?)-1945) devoted many years and a unique ingenuity in assembling what probably constitutes the most comprehensive collection of early sources of science and technology in any part of our country. Having elsewhere (*Papers* of the Bibliographical Society of America, 23(1929);

and in my *The Fortune of Books* (1941), 105-121, and see also an excellent account by Ralph Hagedorn, in the *Papers* of the Bibl. Soc. of Amer. 44(1950)) described and commented upon this exquisite, carefully selected unit, the writer can record here only his deep admiration of the confessedly unlearned scholarship responsible for this collection of historically fundamental books in pure and applied science. The Thordarson collection numbers about 25,000 pieces, the larger number having been critically studied and considered by the owner, who was able to rest one hand on Chaucer and the other on Tyndall or Darwin or on some reminiscence, or one of the Icelandic classics, outline the connection and draw the conclusion about the related basic inspiration; and from empiric conclusion athwart the ages to experimentation and deduction. Chester H. Thordarson was a philosopher and — quite apart from his inventive talents, — the most expert interpreter of books within the writer's experience. He had the rare gift of *seeing* the electric current. With only a few years of intermittent schooling in childhood, young Ella Wheeler Wilcox being his teacher, he read and thought and combined observations of the fine forces, and made inventions, and built intricate machinery, until contemporaries named him the Nicola Tesla of America. His precious books *proved his inspired theses*

about life and movement without dominating his thoughts. In my little book, *The Spring in the Wilderness*, I have recounted the main events in his life and indicated their coherence. The last thing I was privileged to do was to convince the authorities of the University of Wisconsin, after Thordarson had left us, that they would serve countless future generations by acquiring the library of the old sage of Rocky Island. They did.

Thordarson's magnificent copy of the imperial folio Audubon's *Birds of America* was discovered by Walter Hill in Chicago about 1910. Two ladies, the owners, had been offered two hundred dollars for it. Hill bought it for three thousand. About fifteen years later it was rebound by Riviere in full morocco at the expense of a similar amount.

Private Chicago collections of relatively smaller scope naturally have been numerous. Each person seeks what he needs or wants; the more limited his choice, the more likely is the result to be relatively complete. Several medical men deserve mention. Dr. Mortimer Frank (1874-1919) assembled a very good collection in historical medicine, notably illustrated works, which served as material for his translation (really an elaboration) of Choulant's *History of Anatomical Illustration* (Chicago, 1920). Frank's collection was

donated as a unit to the University of Chicago. It was built up by Walter Hill.

Dr. Robert Sonnenschein (1879-1939) also gave much attention to medical history and brought together about two thousand portraits of scientists, physicians, and inventors — in engraving, mezzotint, copper, steel and woodcut. This collection covers older as well as later periods, and most of it had been thoroughly studied by the owner before it was transferred, after his death, to The John Crerar Library, with a very fine collection of early medical classics, by donation.

The Crerar Library brings to mind the early activities of Dr. Nicholas Senn, literally a collector of medical book collections. He acquired, first for his own use, afterwards for the Newberry Library, the private libraries of Drs. Meissner and Baum (rich in medical classics of early days), parts of the DuBois Reymond library, and considerable sections of the private collections of Helmholz, Virchow, and others. In 1907 these holdings were transferred to the Crerar Library by gift, and the regular Newberry medical collections, originally purchased, were then sold to the Crerar as a unit. This library, in later years as formerly, received by gift or bequest many other units complementing its holdings in science and Medicine, as well as numerous individual books and sets of periodicals. The latest is the mag-

nificent collection, including historical and clinical and bibliographical apparatus, of international scope, on the specific subject of diseases of children, the special field of its owner and donor, Dr. Clifford G. Grulee.

Walter Hill had a considerable share in the development of the LeRoy Crummer collection of historical Medicine, now in the University of Michigan. Crummer's $5,000 treasure of fugitive anatomical sheets cost him twenty dollars.

In conclusion, I am in memory approaching the entrance of an Evanston mansion about forty years ago. The door opens, and several young persons — girls in their teens — are leaving. They whisper among themselves and look impressed with some experience, almost as if they came from a grand party.

These children had been entertained for an hour or more by one of our most renowned collectors of great and famous books, William Smith Mason, who specialized upon Benjamin Franklin and pertinent early sources and documents of our national history. Mason differed from most other Chicago bookmen in his readiness to share his knowledge, enthusiasm, and experience with anyone that showed an interest. He would meet a party of high-school students with as much genuine concern as he might be expected to bestow

upon some learned historian or some visiting bibliographer. His collections were grand in scope, grander perhaps than even Mr. Ayer's, a potential treasure anywhere, and at last a real treasure in the possession of Yale University, donated by the owner. His efforts stand out as a great accomplishment, even if it remains true that wealth will pave the way to many things; but Yale indeed will be fortunate if the Mason Collection retains the atmosphere and spirit which its master infused into it while it was under his personal care and supervision in the mansion in Evanston. Here scholars were welcomed and even children given serious and thoughtful lessons, while bibliographical problems received attention as close as did great events and national problems of past times.

Was this a remote inheritance or a simple inspiration? Probably both. Probably also a survival of true Western hospitality. Do great books speak through their admirers? Assuredly! Dante, I believe, told us that "lingua est consequentia rerum." So are books. They speak *when opened.*

If there be a logical corollary to these sketchy traits of bookish activities in Chicago, it is this: first the gleaning of the collector; then the harvest by the librarian; and finally, the pragmatic philosophy and the pedagogics of the art, knowledge, profession, and skill which validate and humanize

the motives and purpose of action through critical reading.

And in final conclusion: While library authorities and booksellers naturally must work in amiable concert, no librarian can possibly spare enough time to haunt book shops, "talk" books and learn from this milieu. And yet, even by casual visits, such as mine at Walter Hill's, observant persons may learn much. A glimpse, a reference, a casual remark, may yield useful knowledge. I saw in Hill's shop thousands of books and learned thousands of facts about them, and, with old Ned, I can truly say: "Nothing that I have ever seen is forgotten."

My most exciting book shop experience elsewhere was to examine a number of bound volumes of pamphlets in the hope of finding some early railroad reports for Crerar, and finding some — but missing a copy of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (without the covers). But I was not sorry to miss it.

Our respective sympathies and antipathies were a source of much pleasant banter and "joshing" in the group that met at Hill's. And of serious discourse.

There came Austin J. Cross, the book-mending wizard, who once *split* a sheet of tissue paper, and was a comfort to many great bookmen and li-

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brarians East and West. There was that handsome bibliologist, Vincent Starrett, who rose from a reportership on the "Daily News" to authoritative authorship. Hill published his books on Ambrose Bierce and Arthur Machen and his exquisite gem *The Unique Hamlet*. Roswell Field came and went before my time. There was Lessing Rosenthal, the "cunctator," who saved up fine modern printing, and his jovial friend Joseph Schaffner, and the meticulous Lepunsky, also keen on good printing, — and Arnold Shircliffe, Chicago's foremost *restaurateur*, who collected menus, lectured on foods in colleges and universities, a classical scholar and still the author of a monumental work on salads, — he left us in September.

And Thordarson would drop in. Well, well, there was Shakespeare's *Poems* of 1640, "a nice corner-stone for my collection, a fine book, eh, Mr. Bay, hm, hm, hm?"

In a corner often was enthroned Dr. Wilfrid Osgood, of the Field Museum, enveloped in an aura of judicious and constructive meditation, while Llewellyn Jones gingerly passed his sensitive fingers over the new books.

Mr. Spoor, majestic, might stalk in and inquire about the Shelley letter on which he had made a bid at a distant auction. A magnate — on this occasion irked by Shelley's handwriting and a

couple of quotations in Greek, which he ordered me to decipher. What business did that fellow have to make quotations in Greek?

"Ask Bay," said Hill. "He hates Shelley like poison." And Spoor stared at me, but smiled. The smile improved his expression.

We had much fun over my instinctive dislikes. It is true that I dislike Shelley as a bounder and a false prophet; that I looked askance at Poe and Whitman, and did not care about George Moore, with his "limited" editions of a thousand copies, and had other mental defects. But Leslie Anderson agreed with me — good Leslie, who was for forty years the majordomus and the financial conscience of the place, yet never took to but one book, *Nicholas Nickleby.*

But I liked very much the *Flower in the crannied wall* in Tennyson's handwriting on Farringford stationery, and Stevenson's letter about his feelings after reading *The Christmas Carol.*

I often, in private, addressed Hill as Mr. Cheeryble, and many will agree that it was appropriate. Charles or Ned, either of them.

As the years crowded in upon him, there were many things he would like to do, having missed them in his younger, strenuous days. One was to take a look at the original manuscript of Gray's *Elegy.* He attained this. But he never found the manuscript of Stevenson's *I'll sing you a song.*

Nor did he go into the Boston Atheneum and see the copy in boards, uncut, of the Williamsburg Filson's *Kentucky* — with the autograph of George Washington on the title-page.

A few rewards came to him, however. One left him pondering on ethical principles. Otherwise professional ethics bloomed in his garden. At auctions he invariably stood by the books that he had sold, and he duly bid up to the amount of his prices, whether or not be wanted these items. But then the following situation arose. One of his patrons died, a hard man, overbearing and dictatorial, always ready to take every advantage. His collection later landed in the auction rooms. Walter Hill, with many other bookmen, scanned the books before the sale. The lot included a set of Dickens' Christmas books, first editions, in fine condition. Hill bid it in at a moderate price, but when he examined it at home, he discovered that one of the volumes bore an autograph inscription by Dickens, dedicating the copy to Walter Savage Landor. This had passed unnoticed every functioning authority and dozens, perhaps hundreds, of keen and observant persons. — Now, what was to be done? It made a difference in value of $1,200.

I saw the book and looked at the inscription. The question was beyond my poor faculties. Finally I blurted out: "Well, I personally don't

care a straw for Walter Savage Landor. The book is of little consequence."

The old gentleman glared. "Yes," he said, "I knew you would say something like that. Did you look at the book plate?"

I nodded.

He put the set away.

I never learned what he did about it. But nobody knowing him well will deny that the old General deserved a windfall.

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